



British
Waterways
Dyfrffyrdd
Prydain

CANOEIST'S GUIDE TO THE MONTGOMERY CANAL



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The Tranquility of the Montgomery Canal



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The quiet waters of the Montgomery Canal

INTRODUCTION TO THE MONTGOMERY CANAL

The Montgomery Canal was built in stages between 1794 and 1821 and runs from the Llangollen Canal at Frankton Locks to Newtown in Powys.

Approximately 35 miles in length, the Montgomery Canal was constructed to carry and distribute limestone for agricultural purposes but was also used for the transportation of lead, slate, timber and other products. There are many lime kilns to be found along the full length of the canal still in existence today. As time passed by the Montgomery Canal eventually became a part of the Shropshire Union network and continued to be used for industrial purposes well into the 20th Century. However, its active life was brought to an abrupt end in 1936 when a catastrophic breach near Lower Frankton resulted in its closure. The 2nd World War began a few years after the breach and the canal was never reopened as an industrial waterway. By 1963 the Transport Act had classified the Montgomery Canal as a 'Remainder Waterway'. This meant British Waterways could only maintain the canal for safety and amenity purposes. As such the canal fell into further dereliction until years later, with a huge drive

from local communities and volunteers, a section of the canal was restored at Welshpool in 1969 when a road by-pass threatened the future existence of the route. This began a drive by voluntary groups, local communities and British Waterways to restore the canal to its former glory. That effort has made huge progress and continues today.

The restored and navigable sections of the Montgomery Canal are still isolated in parts from the national canal network by road crossings but much of it is once again open to boats and canoes. Today there are over 30 miles of quiet waters to be explored and enjoyed by the canoeist. A 3 mile section of the canal is still dry between Maesbury Marsh and Llanymynech but British Waterways and volunteers are working towards reopening this section one day. For the moment, canoes have to be transported around this dry section by road.



Damselfly



Kingfisher

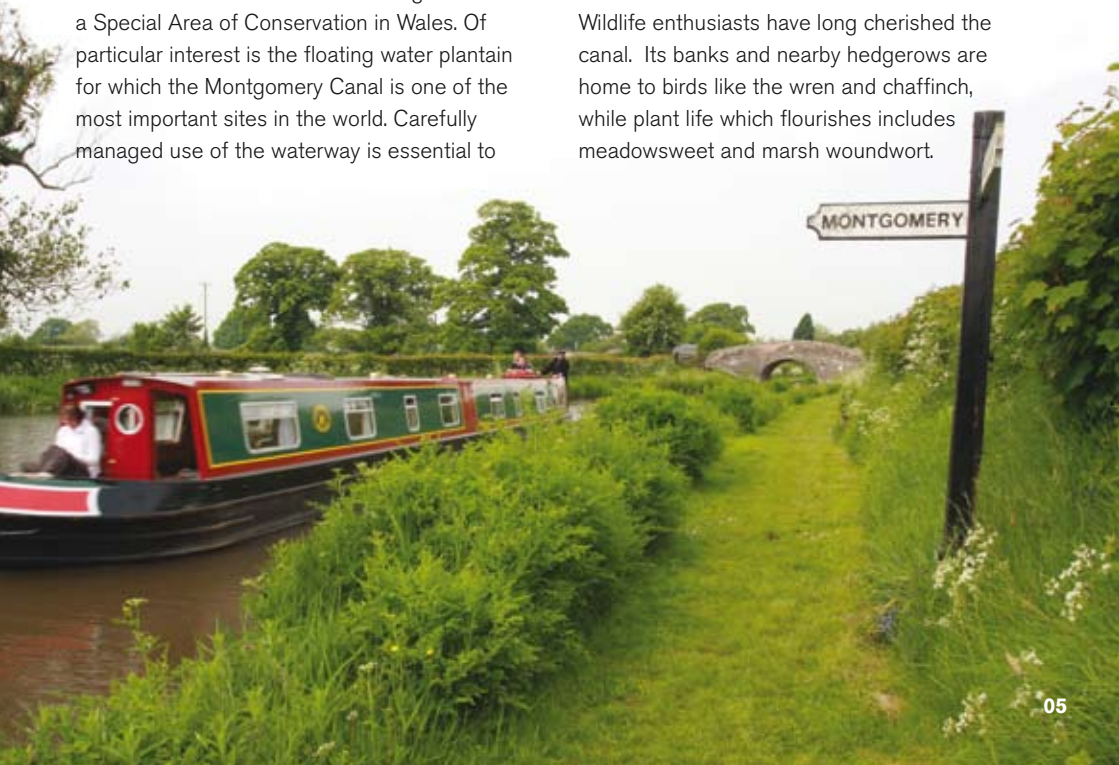
The canal has moved from its industrial past to being of great recreational and conservation value today. It is now used by many thousands of visitors each year in the pursuit of walking, angling, boating and canoeing, as well as general enjoyment of the countryside. For the canoeist, the Montgomery Canal is one of the most boat free and quietest canals in Britain, offering the opportunity to escape the world as the canal winds its way through peaceful countryside.

The canal is a declared Site of Special Scientific Interest for over two thirds of its length and a Special Area of Conservation in Wales. Of particular interest is the floating water plantain for which the Montgomery Canal is one of the most important sites in the world. Carefully managed use of the waterway is essential to

ensure a sustainable future for these rare aquatic plant communities.

The aquatic vegetation is the habitat of many damselflies and dragonflies, including the white-legged damselfly. Aquatic insects, in turn, support shoals of fish such as bream, roach, pike, carp and tench. As you paddle along the canal you may notice wooden structures with net sides in the water. These are 'in-channel nature reserves' which help to encourage and protect rare plants and wildlife. Please help to protect these areas and others by respecting the canal and its wildlife.

Wildlife enthusiasts have long cherished the canal. Its banks and nearby hedgerows are home to birds like the wren and chaffinch, while plant life which flourishes includes meadowsweet and marsh woundwort.





NAVIGATION AND USE OF LOCKS

The Montgomery Canal is a quiet, relaxing canal to paddle along and is ideal for people of all abilities and ages. The first route in this guide (Ellesmere to Lower Frankton) is along the Llangollen Canal, leading to the Montgomery and is a busier stretch of water but still relaxing and enjoyable.

There are six day routes to enjoy using this guide. Each route follows the same format of a short introduction and description of the route with a supporting map and key. All distances are given in kilometres to complement the format of Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps. The maps within this booklet are not a substitute for scale maps and are intended for guidance only.

There are a number of road crossings along the Montgomery Canal where the A483 intersects. As with crossing any road, caution should be used and the Highway Code observed. It may be easier for canoes or kayaks to be carried across roads between two people or on a trolley. When crossing roads make sure you are both ready to cross at the same time if two people are carrying a canoe together. If using a trolley ensure the canoe is firmly strapped down and aligned properly.

As a guide, the canal bank on the opposite side to the towpath is generally in private ownership so only get in or out on the towpath side of the canal. Along the canal and especially at locks there are often stone walls (called wash walls) or metal pilings. If you are using a Canadian canoe two or three empty plastic water bottles tied to

string and hung over the side to act as fenders can save unnecessary scratches to your boat. Canal locks are designed for large craft which can only be moved between water levels using the locks. In the interests of safety and water conservation canoes and kayaks are prohibited from using the locks. Instead canoe and kayaks should be carried around the locks. It is advised that one canoe/kayak be carried between two people if possible or, better still, use a canoe trolley if you have one.

SAFETY ON THE WATERWAYS

All bodies of water can be dangerous if they are not treated with respect and canals are no different. By following the general guidance below you and others will have a safer and more enjoyable day. This guide is not a substitute for common sense and self-responsibility.

- Keep away from and do not enter locks or sluices.
- Look after the waterway environment and avoid damaging banks and bankside vegetation. Do not pick, uproot, or trample wild plants on the bankside or in the water.
- Do not disturb birds and other wildlife found along the waterway. Avoid getting too close to wintering wildfowl and nesting birds. Stop canoeing if you are clearly disturbing wildlife.
- Do not trespass on private or banks or moorings. Wherever possible, land at recognised locations only.
- Never throw rubbish in the waterway or leave it on banksides. Take it home or place it in a bin.

- Please be considerate of others by keeping noise to a minimum and have respect of other users of the waterway.
- Obey the general rules of navigation. Avoid crossing the bows of oncoming craft of any kind at close quarters. In particular remember that larger boats are less manoeuvrable and cannot use such shallow waters as a canoe or kayak.
- Do not get between two passing boats.
- Give precedence to those engaged in organised competition and have regard to any instructions given by officials.
- Have special regard for beginners, as you would for learner drivers on the road.
- If required, hail to draw a person's attention to a situation, which might result in inconvenience, damage or collision. Please treat a hail as a friendly warning and not an insult.
- Take note of warning signs.
- Keep an eye out for concealed mooring pins or ropes across the path and beside moored boats.
- Pass anglers quietly. Try to:-
 - Keep away from banks that are being fished.
 - Comply with reasonable directional requests.
 - Keep well clear of fishing tackle.
 - Avoid loitering in areas that are being fished.
 - Cause as little disturbance to the water and fish as possible.
- Park vehicles and trailers responsibly so that they do not cause a nuisance to others.
- Groups of young or inexperienced canoeists should be accompanied by a suitably experienced, responsible person - preferably a qualified instructor.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

The quality of the water in the Montgomery and Llangollen canals is generally good, but unlike tap water it is untreated and contains natural bacteria and other micro-organisms. Although the risk of contracting an illness is small, do not

swallow canal water and always wash your hands before eating or handling food.

LEPTOSPIROSIS (WEIL'S DISEASE)

Leptospirosis is an animal infection. The infection is caught by direct contact with bacteria in some animal urine or a polluted environment. The bacteria can enter the body through broken or cut skin or via the eyes, nose or mouth.

The usual incubation period is 2 to 12 days. Usually a flu-like illness occurs which resolves in 2 to 3 weeks. A few cases develop jaundice, and then the condition is known as Weil's Disease. Leptospirosis and Weil's Disease are very rare but Weil's Disease in particular is a very serious illness and must be swiftly diagnosed and treated. If you think you may have the infection, go to your doctor as soon as possible and tell him/her that you have recently been in contact with water where leptospirosis causing bacteria may be present.

To minimise any risk always:

- Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof plasters
- Always wear foot-wear to avoid cutting feet
- Avoid capsizing or rolling practice in suspect waters
- Where possible, shower soon after canoeing or kayaking.

PERMITS AND LICENCES

A permit or licence is required for anyone wishing to canoe on a waterway in the management of British Waterways. Day, weekly or monthly permits for the Montgomery and Llangollen Canals are available from the British Waterways offices in Northwich. For general enquiries please telephone 01606 723800. Alternatively a twelve month licence is included free as part of the membership package for either the British Canoe Union or the Welsh Canoeing Association. The package also includes Public Liability Insurance. Please see the Useful Contacts section of this booklet for contact details.



The mere from which Ellesmere takes its name



The old brick houses of Wharf Street

DAY ROUTES

ROUTE 1 - Ellesmere to Lower Frankton (Llangollen Canal) 5.8 kilometres

The route begins at the wharf-side in Ellesmere at the end of Wharf Street. Short stay street parking is available on Wharf Street for the unloading of canoes. Long stay car parking is available in Ellesmere, adjacent to the town centre off Cross Street. (Do not park in the short stay area.)

Ellesmere is a handsome and busy 18th century market town with narrow winding streets and many tall red brick houses. It takes its name from the large and beautiful mere to the north of the canal. There is a Tourist Information Centre on Wharf Street, 180 metres from the canal side.

At the beginning of this route the main arm of the canal bears sharply to the southwest as you

pass under a foot bridge, heading for Llangollen. The buildings you can see were once the Canal Company's offices, known as 'Beech House' and now house the British Waterways offices and maintenance yard. Beyond the yard the canal begins its journey through quiet countryside, winding its way to Frankton Junction, just over 6 kilometres to the west.

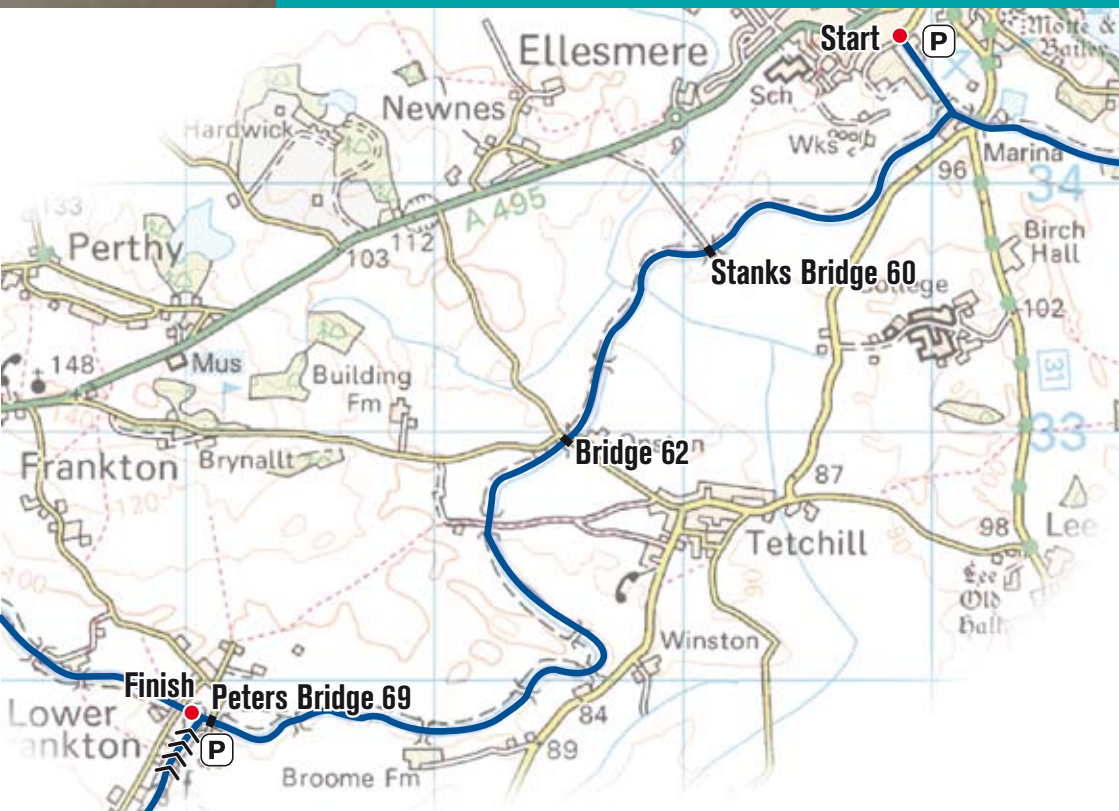
At Lower Frankton the original main line of the canal heads south towards Newtown, descending through the four Frankton Locks, a staircase of one double lock and then two singles. Whilst the Llangollen canal continues west.

The end of this route is above the locks, at the junction of the Llangollen and Montgomery Canals, where there is a small car park beside Peters Bridge No. 69.

KILOMETRES FROM ELLESMERE WHARF AT WHARF ROAD	START	NGR SJ 398345
0.4	British Waterways Offices and Maintenance Yard	SJ 400342
1.6	Stanks Bridge No. 60	SJ 391337
2.7	Coachman's Bridge No. 62, Tetchll	SJ 385329
5.8	Frankton Junction, Peters Bridge No. 69 and Car Park.	SJ 370318



The canal at Ellesmere



KEY	
	Parking
	Portage
	Bridge
	Lock



The old junction sign of the Llangollen and Montgomery canals.



The old warehouse at Rednal Basin

ROUTE 2 - Lower Frankton to Maesbury Marsh 11.1 kilometres

The route begins at the car park beside Lockgate Bridge No.71, below the staircase locks of Frankton Junction, a 5 minute walk away along the canal towpath. From Lower Frankton the canal falls through the newly built Graham Palmer Lock, built to commemorate one of the founders of the Waterways Recovery Group. A commemoration stone dedicated to his memory is sited adjacent to the lock.

The lock itself is very shallow and was constructed during the restoration to compensate for changes to the ground levels that had occurred in the peaty soils since the original construction of the canal some 200 years before.

Meandering through open farmland and passing over the Perry Aqueduct, the canal passes the remnants of the Rednal Basin and Heath Houses. A restored warehouse can be seen beside the canal as the towpath crosses the bridge to the east bank where it remains until Newtown. There is also a free car park over the road at this point if you prefer a shorter days canoeing.

The three Aston Locks just past Queen's Head are set next to the Aston Nature Reserve. As the locks are well spaced it is necessary to paddle between them. After the locks the canal continues through picturesque fields on low embankments and shallow cuttings until it reaches Maesbury Marsh. Here the ironwork of a

KILOMETRES FROM LOWER FRANKTON, LOCKGATE BRIDGE NO. 71 & CAR PARK	START	NGR SJ368310
0.3	Graham Palmer Lock	SJ 366309
1.7	Perry Aqueduct	SJ 360297
3.8	Rednal Basin (Side Bridge)	SJ 351279
4.2	Heath House Bridge No. 74 (and car park)	SJ 350276
5.7	Queen's Head (car park)	SJ 339267
6.1	Aston lock No 1	SJ 336264
7.2	Aston Lock no 2	SJ 331260
8.7	Aston Lock No 3	SJ 328257
10.7	Measbury Marsh Village Bridge No. 79	SJ 313250
11.1	Maesbury Marsh Canal Centre	SJ 309249



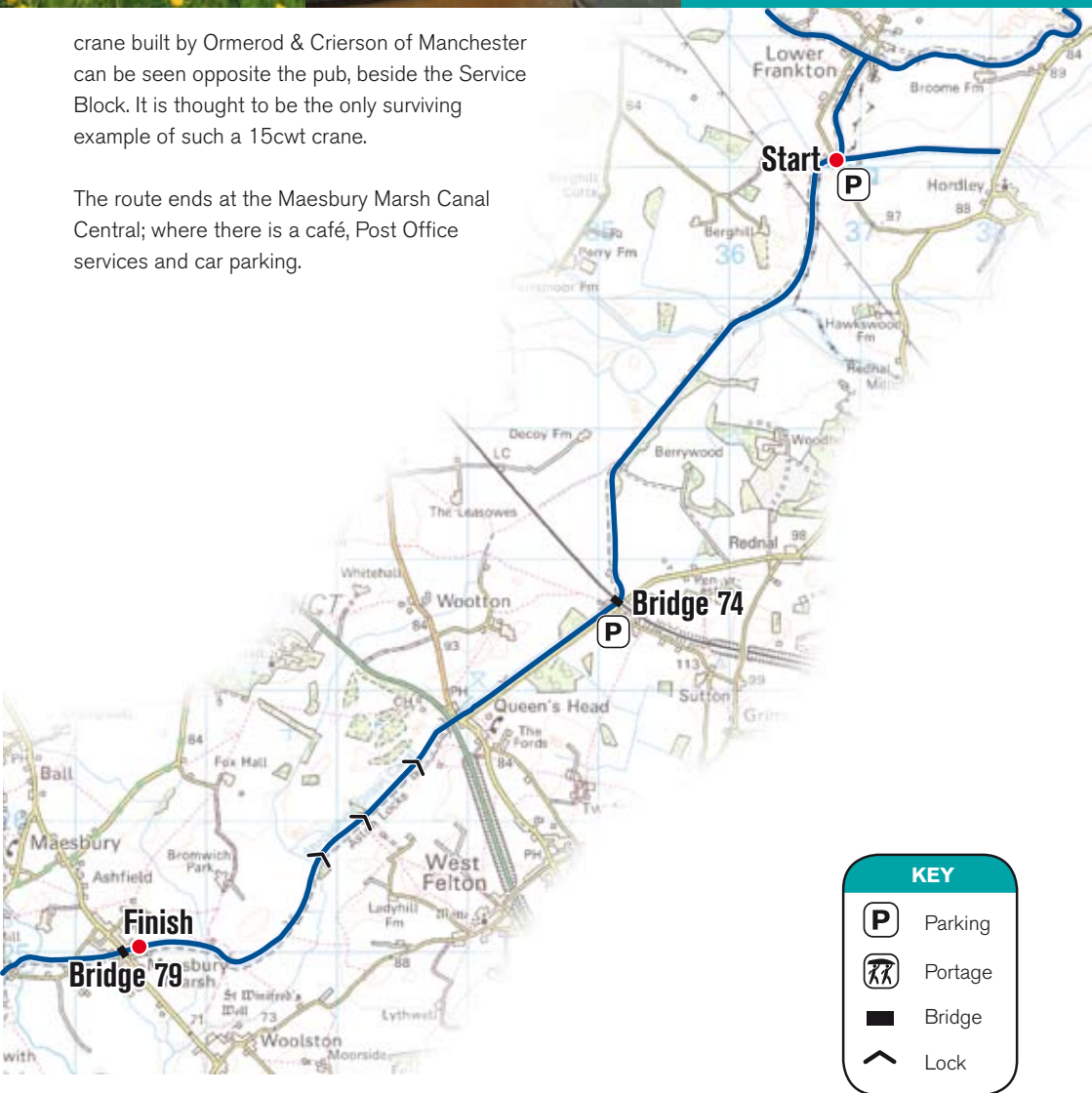
*Graham Palmer's
Memorial Stone*



*Old designs adapted for
today's lift bridges. South
of Maesbury*

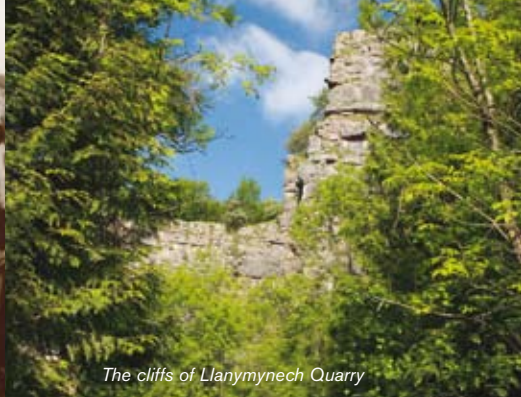
crane built by Ormerod & Crieron of Manchester can be seen opposite the pub, beside the Service Block. It is thought to be the only surviving example of such a 15cwt crane.

The route ends at the Maesbury Marsh Canal Central; where there is a café, Post Office services and car parking.





The men who shaped Llanymynech



The cliffs of Llanymynech Quarry

ROUTE 3 - Llanymynech to Arddleen

8.5 Kilometres

The route begins at the border town of Llanymynech where there is limited free parking at the Heritage Area (on the A483). The Wharf Visitor Centre can be busy at weekends and during the summer months. Alternative free parking, adjacent to the canal, is also available to the rear of the Dolphin Inn.

The Anglo-Welsh border and the Offa's Dyke Trail run through the village of Llanymynech. The border line actually passes through the Lion Hotel. Before beginning your canoe journey the Llanymynech Heritage Area is well worth exploring. The industrial history and significance of the village in the production of lime can be

seen in the restored heritage which boasts some fine old lime kilns and the prominent chimney of the Hoffman Continuous Lime Kiln.

The quarry from which the limestone was taken can be seen above the village and has cliffs reaching over 500 feet in places. It is now a very picturesque nature reserve.

Spanning the River Vyrnwy is one of the canal's original features, the Vyrnwy Aqueduct, originally opened in 1796. South of the aqueduct the canal follows the course of the hills to the west, running through woodland and the rolling countryside.

Upon reaching Arddleen the route continues on for a short way to Burgedin Lock Cottage (British Waterways Offices), where this route ends.

KILOMETRES FROM LLANYMYNECH HERITAGE CENTRE	START	NGR SJ 266210
0.5	Carreghofa Lane (road crossing / portage)	SJ 262208
1.5	Carreghofa Locks (2)	SJ 254202
2.0	B4398 road crossing. (portage)	SJ 253198
2.2	Vyrnwy Aqueduct	SJ 254196
4.0	Canal House Bridge No. 100 (Also known as Clafton Bridge), Canal Road.	SJ 264185
5.7	A483 road crossing Site of old Maerdy Bridge No. 102 (portage)	SJ 263171
7.2	Arddleen, Bridge No 103 (portage)	SJ 260158
8.5	Burgedin Lock Cottage (car park and picnic area)	SJ 252147



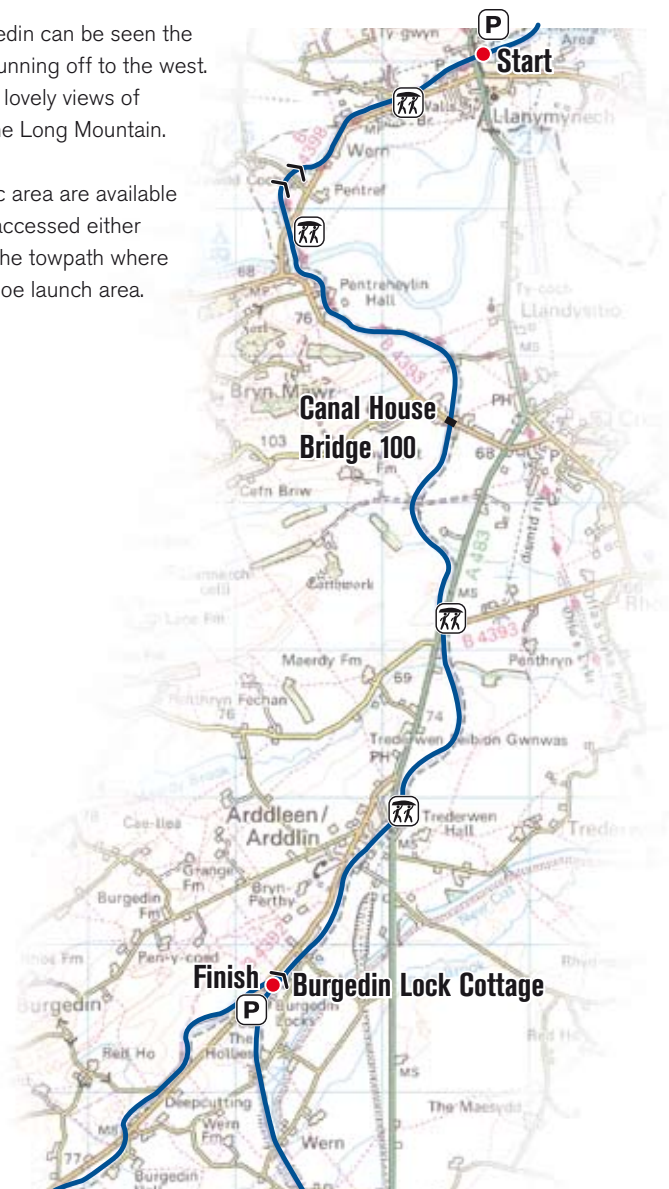
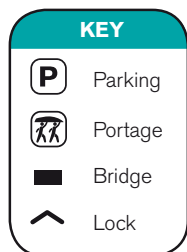
*The beautiful
Vyrnwy Aqueduct*



*A typical cart used to transport
lime to and from the kilns*

Above the locks at Burgedin can be seen the disused Guilsfield Arm, running off to the west. From the locks there are lovely views of the Breidden Hills and the Long Mountain.

Free parking and a picnic area are available here. The canal may be accessed either at the picnic area or via the towpath where there is a rubberised canoe launch area.





Crowther Hall Lock



A quite home for Mute Swans

ROUTE 4 - Arddleen to Welshpool

9.2 Kilometres

Route 4 begins below the locks at Burgedin Lock Cottage, South of Arddleen. Free parking is available at Burgedin Lock Cottage (British Waterways offices). If you are navigating the canal south (towards Welshpool) it is best to carry canoes over the canal bridge and launch below the bottom lock, approximately 100 metres down the towpath. If the bankside is overgrown here an alternative launching point is at Wern Nature Reserve, to the south. A short drive of approximately 0.6 kilometres where free car parking is also available. South of Arddleen there are many reminders of the canal's industrial heritage along its length and in the surrounding area. The first of which is the Wern clay pits, now Wern Nature Reserve, and the remnants of the Wern Corn Mills. The clay from the pits were a major source of

puddling clay used to line the canal, whilst the Corn Mill used the waste water from the locks as it's power source. This beautiful and quiet section of canal is a good place to see wildlife too.

The four locks between Pool Quay and Welshpool begin the canal's slow rise towards Newtown. This stretch of canal is known as the Prince of Wales length, restored by the Prince of Wales Trust and the Shropshire Union Canal Society. Pool Quay was once the highest navigable port on the River Severn, and a transhipment point between the river and canal. The Breidden Hills and Criggon Quarry can be seen to the east. These three impressive peaks dominate the flat landscape of the Shropshire plains. An 18th century pillar can be seen on the summit of Breidden Crag and commemorates Admiral Rodney, who defeated a French fleet off Cape St Vincent, Dominica, in 1782.

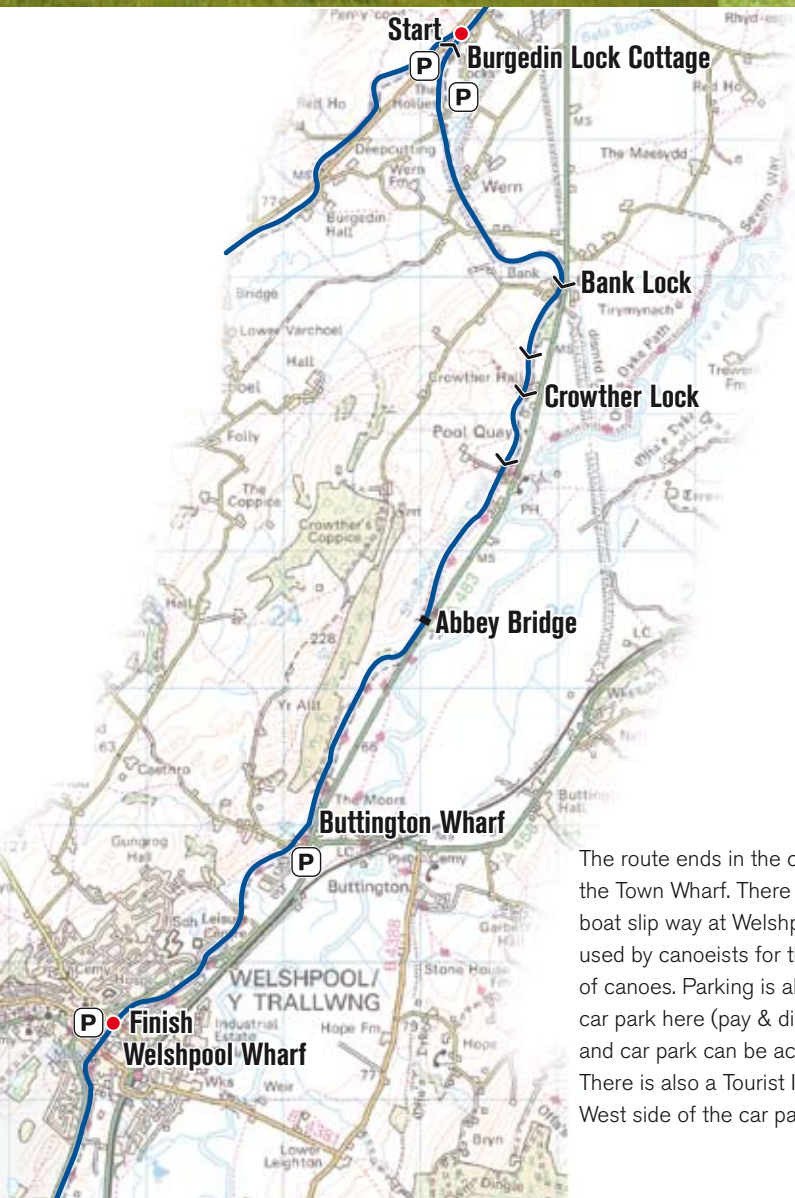
KILOMETRES FROM ARDLEEN, BURGEDIN LOCK COTTAGE	START	NGR SJ 252147
0.6	Wern Red Bridge No. 106 & Nature Reserve (car park and picnic area)	SJ 251141
2.4	Bank Lock	SJ 260129
3.9	Pool Quay Lock Crowther Lock	SJ 256116
5.1	Abbey Lift Bridge No 112	SJ 250105
7.0	Buttington Wharf (car park and picnic area)	SJ 241089
9.2	Welshpool Wharf (car park and Tourist Information Centre)	SJ 227075



Rodney's Pillar



Passing by Wern



KEY	
	Parking
	Portage
	Bridge
	Lock

The route ends in the centre of Welshpool at the Town Wharf. There is vehicular access and a boat slip way at Welshpool Wharf which may be used by canoeists for the loading and unloading of canoes. Parking is also available in the public car park here (pay & display). Both the wharf and car park can be accessed via Church Street. There is also a Tourist Information Centre on the West side of the car park.



The River Rhiw at Berriew



A grey heron sharing the canal

Route 5 - Welshpool to Berriew

8.3 Kilometres

Route 5 begins in the town centre of Welshpool, at the Town Wharf. There is vehicular access and a boat slip way at Welshpool Wharf which may be used by canoeists for the loading and unloading of canoes. Parking is also available in the public car park (pay & display). Both the wharf and car park can be accessed via Church Street. There is also a Tourist Information Centre on the West side of the car park.

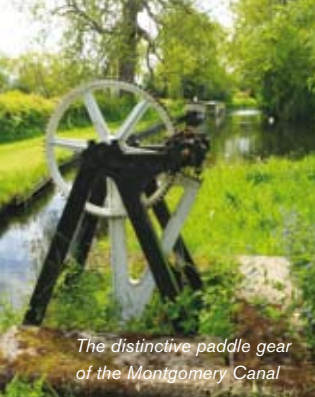
From Welshpool Wharf the canal passes under Severn Street and beside the Powysland Museum before reaching the first lock. Beyond the lock the canal leaves Welshpool and runs at the foot of the grounds of Powis Castle, the seat of the Earl of Powis, taking you into open farmland and quite waters.

Four locks raise the canal towards Newtown, with two at Belan and two before reaching Berriew. This stretch of canal is particularly good for bird watchers with many species regularly seen, such as kingfishers, herons, and high in the sky, buzzards.

Adjacent to Brithdir Locks is a lovely nature reserve and nearby pub, whilst further to the south is the Luggy Aqueduct. This is a small iron trough carrying the canal over the fast flowing Luggy Brook, and was built in 1819 by George Buck who also designed the distinctive paddle gear found at the locks.

At Berriew a two-arched aqueduct carries the canal over the beautiful wooded valley of the River Rhiw. In the centre of the village a handsome 18th century single span stone

KILOMETRES FROM WELSHPOOL WHARF	START	NGR SJ 227075
0.3	Powysland Museum and Welshpool lock	SJ 225073
1.5	Whitehouse Bridge No 120 and Nature Reserve	SJ 223061
2.6	Belen Locks (2) (car park and picnic area)	SJ 216052
4.5	Chapel Bridge No 123	SJ 206037
6.1	Brithdir Lock and Nature Reserve	SJ 199023
6.3	Luggy Aqueduct	SJ 197022
7.4	Berriew Lock	SJ 193012
8.3	Berriew Aqueduct, picnic area and car park	SJ 188066

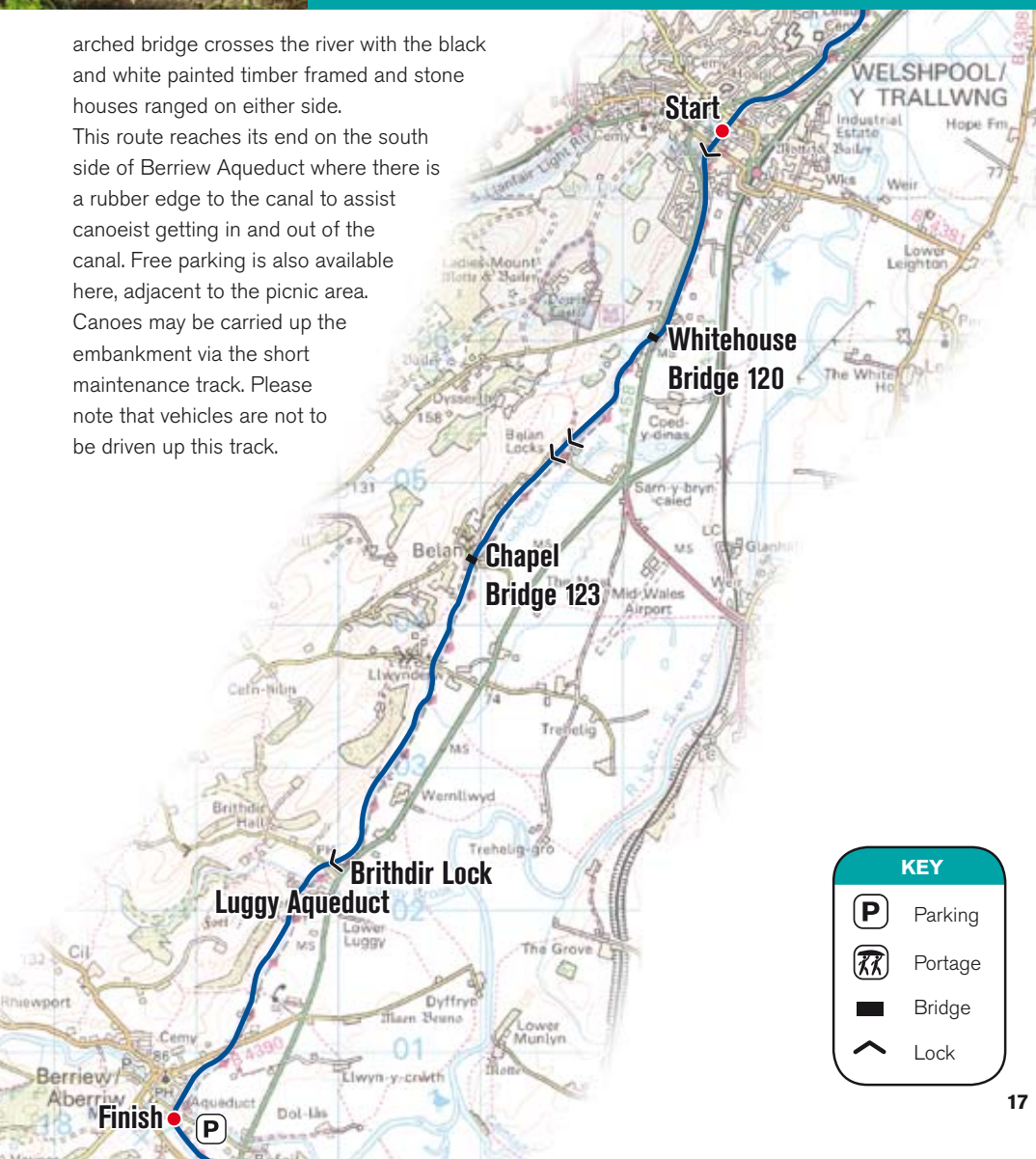


The distinctive paddle gear of the Montgomery Canal

arched bridge crosses the river with the black and white painted timber framed and stone houses ranged on either side.

This route reaches its end on the south side of Berriew Aqueduct where there is a rubber edge to the canal to assist canoeist getting in and out of the canal. Free parking is also available here, adjacent to the picnic area.

Canoes may be carried up the embankment via the short maintenance track. Please note that vehicles are not to be driven up this track.





Views over the Severn Valley



Garthmyl warehouse and cottage

ROUTE 6 - Berriew to Aberbechan

9.9 Kilometres

The route begins beside the aqueduct over the River Rhiw in the picturesque village of Berriew. Free parking is available adjacent to the aqueduct at the picnic area and canoes may be carried up the embankment via the short maintenance track where you will find a rubberised canoe launch area. Please note that vehicles are not to be driven up this track.

Upon leaving Berriew the canal soon reaches Garthmyl. Here the A483 intersects with the canal adjacent to the Naggs Head Pub. For safety it is easiest to cross the road south of the

pub, just beyond the junction where the canal can be rejoined on the other side of the road. Beyond the Naggs Head the canal crosses the A483 twice more as it winds its way through rolling countryside and eventually runs alongside the beautiful River Severn to Aberbechan.

As you pass through Garthmyl, an old village beside the canal, look out for the remnants of the original wharf buildings. This is where the canal originally ended until the navigation was extended to Newtown in 1819, almost two hundred years ago.

From Tan-y-Fron where the River Sever flows next the canal to Aberbechan and on to

KILOMETRES FROM BERRIEW AQUEDUCT	START	NGR SJ 188066
0.6	Refail Bridge No 129. Road crossing. (portage)	SJ 192000
1.8	A483 road crossing, Naggs Head Pub, Garthmyl. Bridge No. 132, disused. (portage)	SO 194990
3.8	A483 road crossing. Old site of Halfway House Bridge No 136. (portage)	SO 181977
4.7	A483 road crossing. (portage)	SO 174972
5.7	Glanhafren Bridge No. 143 and Montgomeryshire WT Nature Reserve	SO 167965
6.9	Brynderwyn Lock	SO 162954
8.1	Byles Lock	SO 155945
8.5	Newhouse Lock	SO 151944
9.9	Limekiln Bridge No. 151	SO 142935



CANOE HIRE & INSTRUCTION

Canoe Clubs

Joining a club is one of the most enjoyable ways to learn the basics of canoeing and to keep on improving whilst making new friends at the same time. Local clubs to the Montgomery Canal include:

Shropshire Paddlesports

www.shropshirepaddlesport.co.uk

Welshpool Canoe Club

www.welshpoolcanoecub.org.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

British Waterways

Wales & Border Counties, Navigation Road,
Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 1BH

Telephone: 01606 723800

www.britishwaterways.co.uk

www.waterscape.com

Email: enquiries.wbc@britishwaterways.co.uk

Environment Agency

Telephone: 08708 506506

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Welshpool Tourist Information Centre

Vicarage Car Park, Welshpool, Powys

Telephone: 01938 552043

www.welshpool.org/tic.html

Welsh Canoeing Association

www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk

British Canoe Union

www.bcu.org.uk

Visit Britain

www.visitbritain.com

Visit Wales

www.visitwales.com

National Rail

www.nationalrail.co.uk

Arriva Buses

www.arrivabus.co.uk

Malachite

www.malachite-group.co.uk

Canal Connections

www.canalconnections.co.uk

ACCOMMODATION

There are many options for accommodation along the Montgomery canal to suit all budgets, including B&B's and camping. Please refer to the Useful Contacts section for further information.

MAPS AND GUIDE BOOKS

Visit www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/ for a full list of maps covering the Montgomery Canal and the section of the Llangollen Canal covered within this guide. The waterproof Explorer Service maps at 1:25,000 scale are recommended:

SHEET NUMBER TITLE

240	Oswestry / Croesoswallt
216	Welshpool & Montgomery /Y Trallwng & Trefaldwyn
215	Newtown & Machynlleth /Y Drenewydd & Machynlleth

An alternate reference is the Nicholson Guide to the Waterways: Four Counties & the Welsh Canals No.4. Other guide books are also available.